

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A system for sharing information between one or more users engaged in analyzing data, comprising:

a data store storing a plurality of data objects;

a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;

an annotation store storing one or more annotations annotating the plurality of data objects edited by the plurality of different applications;

an annotation browser configured to access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the annotation store and provide one or more graphical user interfaces for creating and viewing the one or more annotations wherein the annotation browser is configured to display the one or more annotations along with selectable links from each of the one or more annotations to at least one of the plurality of data objects annotated by the respective annotation of the one or more annotations; and wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective data object to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective data object.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display data and indications of what displayed data has one or more corresponding annotations.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display one or more annotation icons proximate to an annotated data object.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein:
at least one common annotation describes more than one data object; and
the annotation browser is configured to display a common annotation icon proximate to data objects described by the common annotation.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display different annotation icons proximate to data objects described by different annotations.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the annotation browser is configured to display a first portion of annotation data from an annotation, in response to a user positioning a cursor over an associated annotation icon.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the annotation browser is further configured to, in response to the user selecting the annotation icon, display a second portion of annotation data from the annotation.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the annotation browser is further configured to, in response to the user selecting the annotation icon, retrieve the second portion of annotation data from the annotation store.

19-24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:
a data store storing a plurality of data objects;

a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;

an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations, wherein the plurality of annotations are stored separately from the plurality of data objects;

a set of data object points, each data object point comprising an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations;

a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point;

a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and an annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points; and

a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations in the annotation database, wherein the browser application is configured to: (i) access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object.

26-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:
- an annotation server, comprising:
 - an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations;
 - a data store storing a plurality of data objects;
 - a set of data object points, each data object point being an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations;
 - a set of index tables indexing the one or more of the set of data object points annotated by the one or more of the plurality of annotations, wherein each index table corresponds to a different type of data object point;
 - a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;
 - a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point, and each corresponding to a specific combination of user role and data scope; and
 - a set of administration tools configured for creating and modifying the set of annotation structures;
 - a client computer, comprising:
 - a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and the annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points;
 - an annotation broker managing messages passing between the annotation server and the set of plug-in components; and

a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations, wherein the browser application is configured to: (i) access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object; and

a communications network providing connectivity between the client computer and the annotation server.

Please add the following new claim:

37. (New) A system, comprising:

a data store storing a plurality of data objects;

a plurality of different applications for editing the plurality of data objects, wherein each application performs a different type of editing and wherein a relationship is defined between each data object and a respective application for editing the respective data object;

an annotation database storing a plurality of annotations, wherein the plurality of annotations are stored separately from the plurality of data objects;

a set of data object points, each data object point comprising an annotatable portion of one of the plurality of data objects, wherein one or more of the set of data object points is annotated by one or more of the plurality of annotations;

a set of index tables indexing the one or more of the set of data object points annotated by the one or more of the plurality of annotations, wherein each index table corresponds to a different type of data object point;

a set of annotation structures, each defining a set of annotation fields selected to capture annotations of a specific type of data object point;

a set of plug-in components, each interfacing between one or more annotation applications and an annotation server, wherein the annotation server is configured to: (i) receive, via the plug-in components, requests to access the plurality of annotations, the requests issued by the one or more annotation applications and (ii) generate a graphical user interface screen, based on an annotation structure associated with one or more of the set of data object points, for creating or viewing annotations for one or more of the set of data object points; and

a browser application configured to browse the plurality of annotations in the annotation database, wherein the browser application is configured to: (i) access, by operation of one or more computer processors, the plurality of annotations independently of the annotation applications in which the plurality of annotations were created and (ii) display the plurality of annotations along with selectable links from each of the plurality of annotations to at least one data object point annotated by each annotation, wherein selecting any one of the selectable links causes the respective application for editing the respective annotated data object point to be invoked according to the defined relationship between the respective application and the respective annotated data object, wherein the browser application is configured to display a first annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has a single annotation and a second annotation icon to indicate a displayed data object has multiple annotations, wherein the browser application is configured to display a first portion of annotation data from an annotation, in response to a user positioning a cursor over an associated annotation icon, and wherein the browser application is further configured to, in response to the user selecting the annotation icon, display a second portion of annotation data from the annotation.